

COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

The Community Preservation Committee is pleased to submit its annual report of activities for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2010.

The Community Preservation Process in Wellesley

In 2002, Wellesley accepted the Community Preservation Act ("CPA") and formed a Community Preservation Committee. Pursuant to the CPA, Wellesley established a surcharge of 1% on the local property tax, and began to set aside the proceeds of the surcharge in order to pursue Community Preservation activities, encompassing four purposes -- open space, historic resources, recreational uses and community housing. Funds raised through the local surcharge are "matched" annually by monies from a Massachusetts Community Preservation Trust Fund, which is made up of revenues from Land Court and Land Registry fees. As a direct result of the decline in the real estate market and the increase in the number of communities adopting the CPA, the State match has declined substantially. In October, 2009 Wellesley received \$277,307 representing a 35% match. It is expected that the payment the Town will receive in October, 2010 will be approximately \$235,000 reflecting a match of some 30% of local collections. There is some optimism that with the real estate market stabilizing the state match may stabilize or increase and efforts continue at the General Court to CPA increase funding and establish a floor level of match. The Community Preservation Committee is supporting this legislation through the Community Preservation Coalition and directly through the Town's elected legislators.

The Town's Community Preservation fund continues to be financially strong, despite the decline in revenues. Please see the Community Preservation columns of the Non Major Governmental Funds Combining Balance Sheet and Non Major Governmental Funds Combining Statement of Revenues, Expenditures, and Changes in Fund Balances in the Town's Comprehensive Annual Financial Report for detailed information.

In each year, a required minimum of 10% of all revenues collected by a CPA community from its surcharge and from the State match must be expended (or "banked" in dedicated reserves for future use) for each of the statute's three primary purposes of open space (excluding recreation), community housing and historic resources. The remaining 70% of all Community Preservation funds raised annually by a community which are not so earmarked may be used currently or retained for future appropriation, at the municipality's discretion, for any of those three primary statutory purposes or for the fourth purpose of recreation.

Community Preservation funding proposals generally consist of capital expenditures for the purposes permitted by the CPA -- maintenance and ordinary operating expenses are not eligible and even capital spending related to recreational and open space properties not acquired with CPA funds are constrained. All expenditures from a local Community Preservation fund are subject to two basic requirements: (1) they may be made only upon appropriation adopted in the usual manner (in Wellesley's case, by vote at an Annual or Special Town Meeting), and (2) only those projects or proposals which receive the affirmative support of the local Community Preservation Committee are eligible for appropriation.

In response to the requirements of the statute, Wellesley's Bylaw provides that the Committee have representatives from five designated boards – Natural Resources Commission, Planning Board, Recreation Commission, Housing Authority and Historical Commission -- and the permitted maximum of four additional members appointed by the Moderator (one of whom is, in practice, appointed from the Wellesley Housing Development Corporation).

An Overview of Community Preservation Activities

The Committee operates pursuant to a Community Preservation Plan for the Town, including specific Decision Guidelines and Goals which are used in reaching decisions about whether and to what extent to recommend funding for the proposals submitted to the Committee. A copy of the Community Preservation Plan as well as other materials, including reports by the Committee to Town Meeting can be found at the Committee's link on the Town's website at www.wellesleyma.gov.

To date, the Committee has funded a total of 35 projects or portions of projects as detailed on the state CPA project website by picking Wellesley from the list on http://maps.massgis.state.ma.us/cpa_town_pick.htm

\$5,212,354 dollars have been appropriated for these projects. Of this total, \$2,185,500 (42.4%) has been appropriated for Community Housing, \$1,791,740 (34.8%) has been appropriated for Recreation, \$871,844 (16.9%) for Historic Resources and \$303,260 (5.9%) for Open Space.

Projects Funded at the 2010 Annual Town Meeting

1. Fuller Brook Park Project: Phase I (Historic Resources)

Sponsor: Fuller Brook Park Coordinating Committee

Description of the Project: Initial planning phase for the rehabilitation of Fuller Brook Park

Recommended Amount: \$250,000

Originally created in 1899, Fuller Brook Park is linear, two-and-a-half mile green space paralleling Washington Street along Caroline Brook and Fuller Brook. It is an important historic, open space, environmental and recreational resource, a vital piece of the Town's Trail system and an essential part of the storm water and drainage system. The Massachusetts Historical Commission has determined that the Park is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places and thus the rehabilitation of the Park is eligible for funding with CPA funds.

The Natural Resources Commission and the NRC staff have worked tirelessly over many years to bring forward a comprehensive program to rehabilitate Fuller Brook Park, including hiring Halvorson Design Partnership to perform a Preservation Master Plan study. Based on that plan, the NRC and the Trails Committee applied to the Community Preservation Committee for \$2.9 million in funding for a complete

multi-year project for the Park. After input from a public hearing and discussions among the CPC and NRC, the Fuller Brook Park Coordinating Committee was formed with a charge of assisting the Town and the NRC with the preservation, restoration and rehabilitation of Fuller Brook Park. The Committee is a task force including designees from relevant Town boards including the Natural Resources Commission (2 members and the Director), Board of Selectmen, Public Works, Historical Commission, Trails Committee, School Committee, and Community Preservation Committee and abutter(s). Members provide input on behalf of their board/committee, and contribute technical expertise and guidance in the development and implementation of the Project. An experienced part time project manager, who will be hired through a RFP process, will assist the Committee in implementation. Throughout Phase I, numerous public meetings and hearings will be held to seek input from abutters, neighbors, and other citizens.

Key elements of Phase I will include

- a boundary, topographical and utility survey
- an arborist treatment plan
- conceptual design alternatives
- cost estimates
- selection of a preferred alternative

The Coordinating Committee plans to come back to the CPC in January 2011 and to the 2011 ATM to request funding for Phase II of the project. Final design documents will be created for selected alternative and necessary permits obtained. Due to the complexities of such a large project involving wetlands and streams, it is anticipated that Phase II will require two years and that the request for approval of Phase 3, the actual rehabilitation work, will be made to the 2013 ATM.

2. Grant to the Wellesley Housing Development Corporation (Community Housing)

Sponsor: Wellesley Housing Development Corporation

Description of the Project: Additional capital to invest in the creation or preservation of affordable housing stock.

Recommended Amount: \$375,000

The CPC believes that providing affordable housing is important to strengthening and preserving the culture of the Town. The Wellesley Housing Development Corporation was created by the Board of Selectmen and Town Meeting for that purpose. Recent studies have validated the growing unmet need for affordable housing for both families and seniors. The weak economy has reduced the number of new affordable units expected from inclusionary zoning regulations. These economic forces, however, are creating opportunities for the Town by reducing the gap between market and affordable for-sale housing prices. There is also a need for resources to move within 90 days of an existing affordability-restricted unit coming on the market to preserve its affordable status. With this appropriation of an additional \$375,000 the WHDC will have \$850,000 available, enough to purchase approximately 2 to 4 units. The CPC believes this is an appropriate balance.

Many Massachusetts communities have Open Space Residential Design or Cluster Zoning provisions, including Wellesley comparable communities Andover, Belmont, Brookline, Lexington and Winchester. The study will: analyze both Cluster and OSRD design options, assess what elements of each approach or a hybrid of both approaches would be successful in Wellesley, and investigate appropriate

incentives to encourage subdivision design which promotes open space as well as affordable housing. The Planning Board believes that Cluster Development or OSRD lends itself directly to Wellesley's efforts for sustainable design and affordable housing.

6. Restoration of the historic Belvedere / Abbott Road sign (Historic Resources)

Sponsor: Salvatore De Fazio

Description of Project: Restore and install historic street sign

Recommended Amount: \$3,000

On July 10, 2009 the historic Abbott Road / Belvedere sign toppled due to age and rot. This sign was erected in the 1920's at the beginning of Abbott Road at Washington Street. The wrought iron sign bracket was forged in one of the leading Boston Art & Crafts studios. The sign announced the entrance to Abbott Road and identified the direction to the Belvedere Estates. The Estates were the first major large house development in Wellesley begun in the 1890's. The Wellesley Historical Commission determined that the sign is a historic resource and supported this project. The estimated total project cost is approximately \$6,000, with the balance of funding provided by private contributions raised from the neighborhood by Mr. De Fazio. The project will be carried out by the Department of Public Works.

Looking Forward

During the coming year, the Community Preservation Committee will continue to work diligently with other Town Boards and community organization to successfully implement already approved projects, consider new projects, and in particular to advance the process of generating long term strategic plans for historic resources, open space, recreation and affordable housing to guide a pro-active program to best utilize the substantial resources generated by the CPA surcharge and State matching funds.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jack Morgan, Chair
Allan Port, Vice-Chair
Kara Cicchetti
James Conlin
Joan Gaughan
Robert Goldkamp
Donald McCauley
Theodore Parker